

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 474

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. Eugene Wesley Fowinkle of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Eugene Wesley Fowinkle; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fowinkle was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, a former commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health, Dr. Eugene Fowinkle was appointed to the post in 1969 by Governor Buford Ellington and continued his service under Governors Winfield Dunn, Ray Blanton, and Lamar Alexander. He provided more than fourteen years of meritorious service to the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, born in Memphis, on September 2, 1934, Eugene Fowinkle earned his medical degree at the University of Tennessee, College of Medicine, interned with the City of Memphis hospitals and was a resident in Neurosurgery at Baptist Hospital in Memphis; and

WHEREAS, beginning his career in public health, Dr. Fowinkle earned a Master's of Public Health degree at the University of Michigan in 1962 and was certified by the American Board of Preventive Medicine. Upon his return to Memphis, he was named the director of Communicable Disease Control at the Memphis-Shelby County Health Department before being named the director of the entire Memphis-Shelby County Health Department in 1966; and

WHEREAS, among his many accomplishments as the Commissioner of the Department of Health, Dr. Fowinkle is especially remembered for overseeing the implementation of Tennessee's Medicaid program in 1969; establishing pre-natal clinics in ninety-four counties; and initiating the Healthy Children program, the first effort to make a significant reduction in the historically-high infant mortality rate in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fowinkle also oversaw the implementation of the major federal Environmental Protection Agency laws and regulations enacted in the 1970s, including those covering air pollution, water pollution, and leaking underground storage tanks, as well as the first solid waste law and hazardous waste law enacted in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after leaving state service in 1983, Dr. Fowinkle was named the Associate Vice-Chancellor for Health Affairs and Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine at Vanderbilt University, in which position he served until his retirement in 1999; and

WHEREAS, active in state, regional, and national health policy, Dr. Fowinkle chaired the Tennessee Coalition for School Health and the Select Committee on Health Care Cost Containment in the mid-1980s, in addition to serving as a member of the President's Commission on the Three Mile Island Task Force on Public Health and Epidemiology in 1979; and

WHEREAS, the result of his leadership on the Three Mile Island Task Force led to the study of the pre-distribution of potassium iodide as a radiation-preventive measure; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fowinkle also rendered sterling service as a member of the Programs and Policies Advisory Committee of the Centers for Disease Control, National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health, the Board of Directors of the Professional Examination Service, and the Milbank Memorial Fund Commission on Higher Education in Public Health; and

WHEREAS, the author and collaborator on countless articles and publications dealing with a broad range of public health issues, Dr. Fowinkle was a member of the Governing Council of the American Public Health Association and the Board of Regents of the American College of Preventive Medicine, and served as president of the American Association of Public Health Physicians 1972-73; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Dr. Eugene Fowinkle received Distinguished Service Awards from the Tennessee Medical Association, the University of Tennessee College of Medicine Alumni Association, the Tennessee Public Health Association, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials; and

WHEREAS, a deeply spiritual individual, Dr. Fowinkle was a longtime member of West End United Methodist Church, where he was active with the choir, participating in several overseas tours; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Fowinkle is survived by his beloved wife, Ruby Youngblood Fowinkle; his three daughters, Greta L. Fowinkle, Freida F. Warner (Deryl Hart Warner), and Brenda Joyce Adcock (Ronald H. Adcock, Jr.); his five grandchildren, Deryl Hart Warner, Jr., Eliza Louise Warner, Jackson Wesley Warner, Eva Joy Adcock, and Trace Aaron Adcock; his sister, Mattie L. Fowinkle; and a host of nieces, nephews and many other dear family members and loyal friends; and

WHEREAS, a gracious gentleman who embodied the ideals of community service and lived a life of purpose, Dr. Fowinkle leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this truly exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. Eugene Wesley Fowinkle, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, his extraordinary contributions to the people of Tennessee, and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Fowinkle.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.